

Long Turks' Heads

Simple ways to make
them & remember How

by Capt. C. Allan McDowall

No. 5 (concludes) <> Designing knots & mats

ومع تسببات الهواء الحار في النهار تنور
الأثرية النادرة في موجبات متتالية فوق الرمال
الخطيلة بالدينية وكأها تحكي القادسين الجدد،
فيهم ضيوف عابرون وليسوا غزاة مقيمين .

ان يغادر « ميثان لين » الذي تكثر فيه
شعالات بيع العصير الملحج ، ويدخل في متاهة
من الأروقة المعرجة . وما ان يصل المرء الى
قاييد حتى يقف مشدوها مع صحبه ، يتأمل

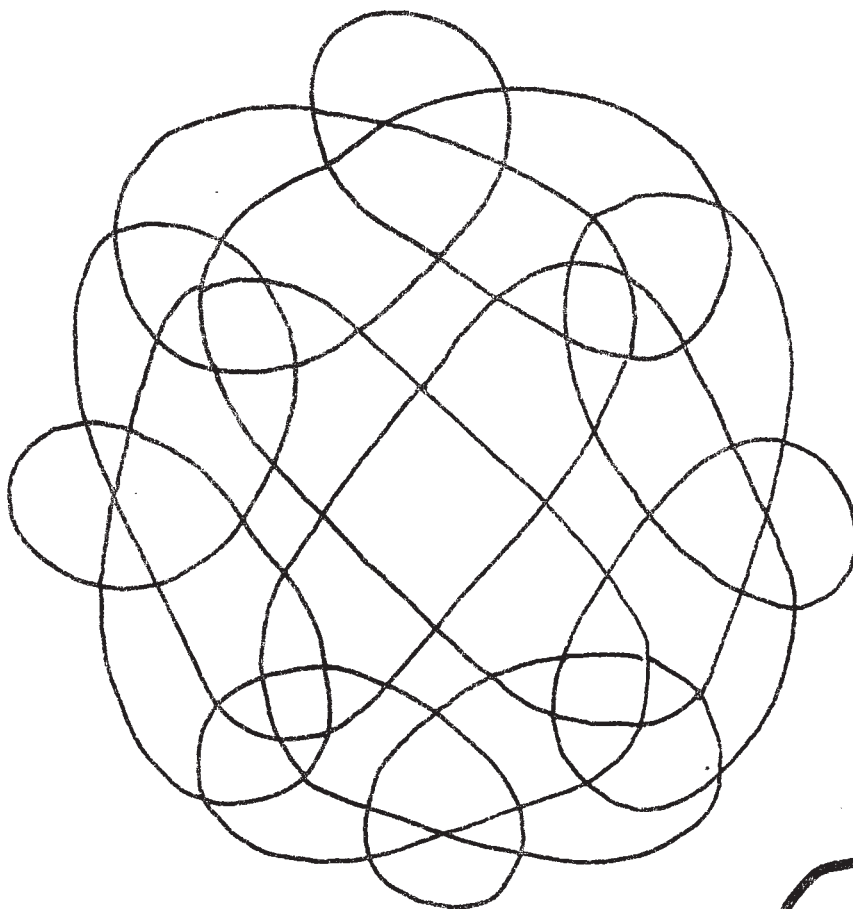


I was looking at the pictures in an Arab magazine the other day, try (without much success...but I live in hope) to work out some of the words, when I came across a photograph of glazed tiles (see the preceding photocopy) in the Bebi Khanem Mosque at Samarkand. This mosque dates from the year 1336, was built by Shah Zanda, and added to - or was it sacked? - by Tamlane. The whole thing looks as exotic and unreachable as it sounds; domes of mud bricks covered in a marvellous blue glaze, catching

the sun's rays in dazzling turquoise glitter. "The Hunter of the East bath caught the Sultan's Turret in a noose of Light," indeed.

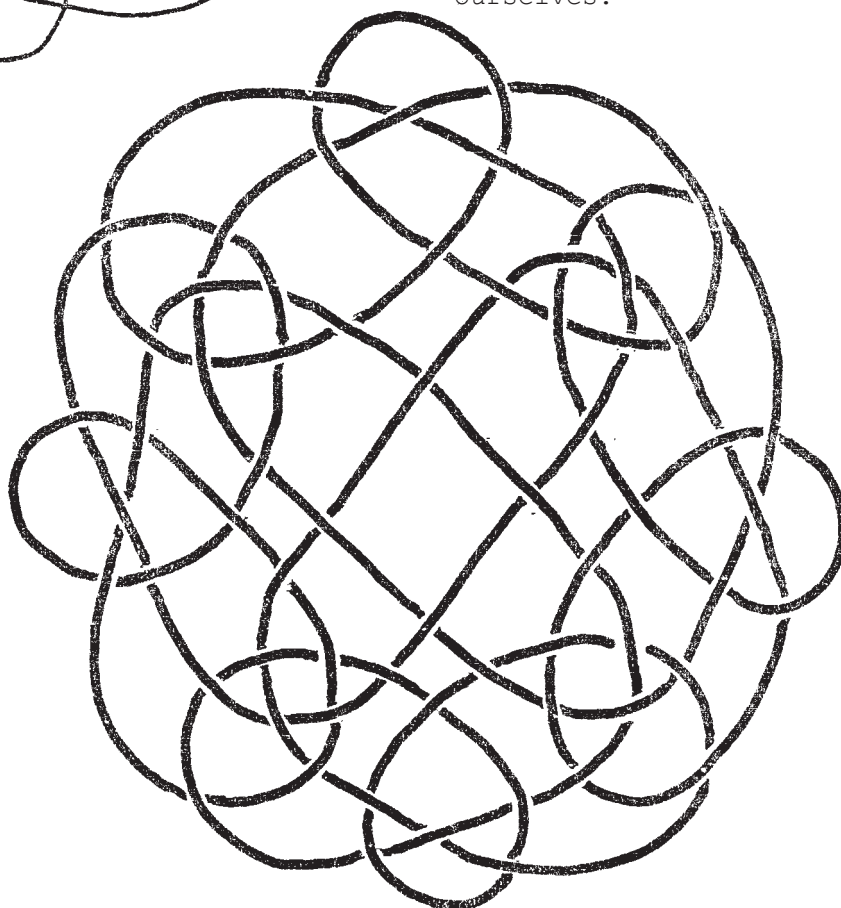
Anyway, the desire to make something came on very strong indeed...and here is the result.

In the 4th. article we used our 'Origami' method to find solutions to the Crucifix Turk's Head, useful for marking the centre on a modern yacht wheel. This method can also be used to satisfy the urge that some of us have from time to time to think up a knot for ourselves.



This knot design inspired by the glazed tiles of Samarkand, was only arrived at after much doodling. You do not need to consider which strands go over or under until after the layout is complete. Simply contrive to arrive at a pattern which satisfies.-

1. The cord should curve naturally and be evenly distributed;
2. The pattern is usually best symmetrical;



3. Holes or compartments with 6 or more sides do not look right, so contrive never to exceed 5 sides;
4. Vary the forms incorporated within the knot or mat to add interest for the eye.

This article and the preceding 4 all came from trying to find an easy way to accomplish that cruciform knot I admired so much at Greenwich. The 'origami' method resulted...the thoughts of one man isolated at sea, much as the old sailing ship men must have been.

Quotation

"One day I was on the forecastle with Mr. Chucks, the boatswain... he taught me a fisherman's bend (sic) which he pronounced to be the KING of all knots; "and Mr. Simple" continued he, "there is a moral in that knot. You observe that when the parts are drawn the right way, and together, the more you pull, the faster they hold, and the more impossible to untie them; but see, by hauling them apart, how a little difference, a pull the other way, immediately disunites them, and then they cast off in a moment. This points out the necessity of pulling together in this world, Mr. Simple, when we wish to hold on."

'PETER SIMPLE', Chapter XIV, by Capt. Frederick Marryat (1792-1848)

I.G.K.T. at Gilwell 1986

Scouts probably tie more knots than any other group, so it seems only right that our Guild should be seen at Gilwell Park, the International Scout Training Centre. In fact, 1986 was the third year we had a demonstration and teach-in base at the annual (60th.) Gilwell Reunion of Wood Badge Holders.

The organisers had invited our President, Eric Franklin, to organise and man a knotting base; he insisted that the I.G.K.T. be represented (reasoning that he doesn't need any publicity in the Scout movement - and that the Guild can always use some). That was accepted. Then difficulties began to arise. Geoffrey, our indefatigable Hon. Sec., who had been a tower of strength at previous Gilwells would just about be on his way home from holiday in America. Robert Jackson, who had volunteered to come, was suddenly shot off to Scotland by his firm; while Percy Blandford (with Ivy, of course) had so much on their plate that, when we knew about it, we just couldn't let them come. At the end, there was only Charlie Smith and Eric, who agreed to carry on. The Charlie brought young Robert Freake (or did Robert bring him?) and - to their surprise and delight - Frank Harris turned up, having come by bus and train, walking the final 1½ miles from the station.

Unlike other Gilwell weekends, the weather was not too kind. Mainly overcast, there were 3 or 4 short, sharp showers when willing volunteers had to whip the display tables out of the rain and under the heavy trees, putting them back again afterwards. Our display was not as elaborate this time because it proved impossible to get the stock from its present home in Woking, Surrey. Mainly it featured Eric's work, augmented by pieces extracted by Frank from the 'Extravaganza' stuff plus several excellent specimens of Celtic knotwork by Charlie.